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ABSTRACT

Leadership development is an important, longstanding concern in career and technical education (CTE). CTE's focus on leadership development has traditionally started in secondary programs, continued in postsecondary programs, and included formal credit and noncredit activities for preservice or inservice CTE teachers or administrators. Because of changes in the nature of work, ethnic/cultural composition of the student body, and public demands on education, a new model of transformational leadership has been advocated to point CTE in new directions. According to transformational leadership theory, the following factors enable leaders to motivate individuals to perform beyond expectations: charisma; intellectual stimulation; individual consideration; and inspirational motivation. Literature reviews have identified "adaptable, open to change" and "visionary" as two key leadership attributes. Successful CTE administrators identified the following on-the-job experiences as helpful to their development as leaders: positions with new/increased responsibilities; special start-up work assignments; handling personnel problems, being mentored, counseled, and supported; and working with a supervisor. The following are among recommendations for improving leadership development efforts: provide careful course structure and direction; allow participants to construct a cognitive leadership model as a basis for activity; provide team-building and on-the-job experiences and time for guided practice; and involve other academic areas in a multidisciplinary approach. The relationship between leadership and gender in CTE has received renewed attention, as have lessons from other areas. (Contains 21 references.) (MN)

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by Michael E. Wonacott

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Leadership Development in Career and Technical Education

Leadership development is an important and long-standing concern in many fields; career and technical education (CTE) is no exception. Concerns about leadership development in CTE today arise from two factors: not only are large numbers of experienced leaders retiring but also the demands placed on CTE leaders are different from those of the past. This ***Digest*** reviews the literature on leadership development in CTE and in other areas to describe how leadership development in CTE is evolving to prepare leaders for the future.

Traditional CTE Leadership Development

CTE's focus on leadership development has traditionally started in secondary programs, where leadership skills are advocated as one part of total student development (Cahill and Brady 1999). Vocational students organizations (VSOs) are a familiar means of providing leadership experiences to students, both inside and beyond the classroom; the 10 VSOs recognized by the U.S. Department of Education served more than 1.5 million students in 1999 and help draw many students to CTE programs (ibid.). Similarly, postsecondary CTE programs continue a focus on developing students' potential, often through postsecondary components of VSOs, as leaders in their chosen career areas (Fitzhugh-Pemberton 1996; Litowitz 1995). Postsecondary CTE leadership development has also provided formal credit courses or noncredit activities for preservice or inservice CTE teachers or administrators, either on leadership development per se or as part of administrator preparation (Bensen and Paige 1996; Fritz and Brown 1998; Viegas et al. 1998), reflecting the prevailing opinion that leadership, although a complex construct of characteristics and behaviors, can be observed, learned, and taught.

Leadership Development for the Future

For more than a decade, calls have been issued for the transformation of CTE in light of changes in the nature of work, the ethnic/cultural composition of the student body, and public demands on education. As a result, a new model of *transformational* leadership is advocated to point CTE in new directions and influence others to believe and follow, adjusting to change and shaping the debate in education. The different demands placed on transformational leaders are reflected in CTE leadership development programs and in recommendations for their improvement. In addition, the different nature of transformational leadership has led to a reexamination of leadership and gender in CTE.

Transformational Leadership. In recent years, leadership development in general and in CTE specifically has evolved away from a model of categorized task-oriented and human relations behaviors toward a model of transformational leadership (Moss and Liang 1990)—"the *process* of perceiving when change is needed and influencing the group by such noncoercive means as persuasion and example in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement" (p. 5). In Bass's original transformational leadership theory (Kuchinke 1999), four factors motivate employees to perform beyond expectations by leaders who develop, intellectually stimulate, and inspire them to work toward a collective purpose, mission, or vision. *Charisma* earns leaders respect, trust, and confidence and transmits a strong sense of mission and vision. Through *intellectual stimulation*, leaders actively encourage employees to question the status quo and to examine critically their own assumptions and beliefs and those of leaders and others. Leaders show *individual consideration* in personalized attention to every employee's needs, so that each feels valued; leaders treat employees differently but equitably based on their needs. Finally, leaders' *inspirational motivation* communicates a vision and the confident, optimistic, enthusiastic belief that the vision is attainable.

Newer definitions of leadership for CTE reflect such a transformational model. The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, for example, conceptualized leadership development as "improving those attributes—characteristics, knowledge, skills, and values—that predispose individuals to perceive opportunities to behave as leaders, to grasp those opportunities, and to succeed in influencing group behaviors in a wide variety of situations. Success as a leader in vocational education is conceived primarily as facilitating the group process and empowering group members" (Moss et al. 1994, p. 26).

Leadership Development Programs. A review of 17 leadership development programs for vocational educators (Moss et al. 1994) found high levels of participant satisfaction and positive changes in two key leadership attributes: "adaptable, open to change" and "visionary." Leadership attributes were more likely to improve when programs were more structured and participant involvement was more active. Improving leadership attributes depended on participants' readiness for change, which could be improved by providing experiences for team building and for reflective, goal-setting self-assessment. In programs for graduate students (compared to those for inservice personnel), the number of leadership attributes significantly increased was in direct proportion to the number of hours of directly supervised instruction. There was no significant relationship between cost per student and the number of leadership attributes that significantly increased.

Five types of on-the-job experiences for developing leadership capabilities were identified by successful CTE administrators as helpful to their development as leaders (Lambrecht et al. 1997): new positions with new/increased responsibilities; special start-up work assignments; handling personnel problems (e.g., conflicts, firings); being mentored, counseled, and supported; and working with a supervisor. Participants reported that those experiences helped develop communication, team-building, interpersonal, and administrative/management skills and helped increase their sensitivity, respect for others, self-confidence and self-acceptance, and broader perspective about the organization. The most effective on-the-job experiences included (1) a variety of challenging situations, providing both the motivation and opportunity to learn and apply new skills and knowledge, and (2) a supportive environment with supervisors as positive role models and mentors as counselors.

Recommendations for improving leadership development efforts include (Bensen and Paige 1996; Fritz and Brown 1998; Lambrecht et al. 1998; Moss et al. 1994) careful course structure and direction by instructors and participant input into planning the specifics of instruction (e.g., coverage of individual leadership attributes). Participants should construct a cognitive leadership model as a basis for activities; reflection and goal-setting should follow self-assessment using a variety of instruments. Programs should provide team-building and on-the job experiences and time for guided practice in applying attributes to be changed and reflection on the experience. Leadership development efforts should involve other academic areas (e.g., business management, psychology, sociology, and educational leadership) in a multidisciplinary approach, and university faculty should have academic grounding in scholarship and research in the behavioral foundations of leadership.

Leadership and Gender. The relationship between leadership and gender in CTE has received renewed attention in the evolution toward transformational leadership, which values stereotypically female traits like communication, inclusion, and nurturance (Thorp et al. 1998). In one study, Moss and Jensrud (1995) found that a sample of female vocational administrators, department heads, and vocational teacher leaders was rated slightly more effective as leaders than males by subordinates and peers. There were no apparent gender biases in the ratings; male and female instructors had the same concept of leadership. On the other hand, Daughtry and Finch (1997) found no correlation between gender of local vocational administrators and teachers' ratings of their effectiveness. However, females rated themselves as more effective than males, and females were rated higher (both by themselves and by teachers) than males on four of five factors constituting transformational leadership. Two interesting findings: female family and consumer sciences undergraduates who used an experimental transformational leadership curriculum were more likely to change career plans and seriously consider leadership positions than female students using a traditional curriculum (Viegas et al. 1998); female students enrolled in an all-female section of an agricultural education leadership development course rated their own abilities to lead, work with groups, make decisions, communicate, and understand themselves higher than did women in a coeducational section (Thorp et al. 1998).

Lessons from Other Areas

Although CTE is in line with other fields in its evolution toward transformational leadership, there are some approaches to leadership development in other fields that could be productive in CTE as well. One emphasis in leadership development for business has an intuitive appeal: the first step in developing leaders is to define clearly and specifically the business result to be achieved—e.g., produce measurable productivity gains among certain workers or solve a given management problem (Zenger et al. 2000).

In other examples, community leadership programs are advocated not only to develop leadership for the sake of the community but also to bring positive and permanent change in leadership behavior in the workplace (Galloway 1997). An interdisciplinary, team-based approach to leadership development is seen as invaluable in the promotion of common principles and core values among actors from different fields who must cooperate and collaborate for a common good (Flexer et al. 1997).

Some programs turn to the past for generalizable lessons in leadership—to fiction and nonfiction classics of Western literature to enhance practicality with vision (Brunner 1999) or to the Christian Bible for values immutable across time and cultures that can contribute to attainment of business excellence (Dahlgaard et al. 1998). Reverse appraisal, in which employees rate their manager's effectiveness, was found highly useful by a major petrochemical company in developing managers' leadership skills (Taylor and Morgan 1995). The centerpiece of a cooperative extension leadership development program was a video-driven, competency-based, computer-stored simulation to assess participants' proficiency in competencies, leadership styles, and values/drives (Ladewig and Rohs 1999).

Changes in the environment in which CTE operates have led to a new model of transformational leaders, empowering and engaging others as active participants in the process of change; a transformational leader is the facilitator, rather than the director, of change. CTE leadership development programs and practices have mirrored the change to transformational leadership and have reemphasized the potential of women as CTE leaders.

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